

**APPROVED**  
**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**City of Fort Lauderdale**  
**100 North Andrews Avenue**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> floor Chambers**  
**Thursday, February 17, 2011 – 6:30 p.m.**

<b><u>Board Members</u></b>	<b>Meeting Attendance</b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance</b>	
		<b>P</b>	<b>A</b>
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	A	8	1
Laura Clark, Vice Chair	P	7	2
Shezette Blue-Small	A	2	1
Catherine Cirillo	P	2	0
Joseph Discepola	P	7	1
Edna Elijah	A	6	3
Elaine Fiore	P	4	2
Roland Foulkes	P	7	0
Nancy Green	A	5	2
Trisha Halliday	P	7	0
Katie Leach	P	4	3
Alan Levy	A	5	4
Dr. Maureen Persi, Ed.D.	A	2	2
Franco Ripple	P	2	0
Lillian Small	P	1	0
Theron Douglas	P	1	0

**Staff and Guests**

Julie Richards, Staff Liaison

Charles Webster, Public Relations & Government Affairs, Broward County Schools  
Omar Shim, Director Capital Budget, Broward County Schools  
Betty Shelley, Council of Civic Associations

Margaret A. Muhl, Recording Secretary

**Students**

Sade Smith

As of this date, there are 16 appointed members of this Board, which means that 9 would constitute a quorum.

**Opening**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Laura Clark at approximately 6:41 p.m.

- Introduction of New Board Members

Vice Chair Laura Clark welcomed everyone and gave a brief description of her background.

All Board Members provided a brief description of their backgrounds.

- Approval of January 20, 2011 Minutes

**Motion** made by Mr. Foulkes and seconded by Ms. Leach to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2011 meeting. Board unanimously approved.

- Guest Speaker

Mr. Shim stated he was present tonight to discuss the status of the capital budget for the school district. He explained this budget oversees the construction program, technology and equipment, as well as maintenance. Vehicles were also part of the capital program. The operating budget controls the day-to-day operations of the school district, including teacher salaries and general operations.

Mr. Shim continued stating that the capital budget is primarily funded through the State levy from the capital outlay millage. In the past, they have been permitted to levy and utilize part of the millage, through legislation, to borrow money to build. In 2008, they were allowed to levy two mills of property taxes for construction and equipment. In that same year, the Legislature took away .25 of the millage reducing it to 1.75 mills. In 2009, the millage again was reduced to 1.5 mills. He stated that property values have decreased, thereby having a negative impact on taxes. Future plans for expansion were postponed, and basically, the building program was eliminated. All other programs, including maintenance, have been reduced.

Mr. Shim explained there were two issues that had to be addressed. One is to restore a technology program, and the other is the transportation program. The good news is that based on revenue projections within the next year, they should be at the bottom, and things would go uphill from there. He explained the Governor's budget contained another rate cut for capital programs. This was not good news because they were at the bare minimum to keeping schools opened. The present situation is dire, but is manageable and will improve.

Vice Chair Clark stated that eventually things would have to improve. She asked how much revenue, per student, was received by the County. Mr. Shim advised the amount was \$6800 per student. Vice Chair Clark proceeded to remark that two million students attend Catholic schools within the United States. SAT scores show public school students had an overall average of 496 points on the critical reading portion of the test while Catholic students scored 533 points. Studies show that Catholic schools have fewer resources and spend \$2,000 less per pupil on average than public schools. And yet, Catholic school students continue to outscore public school students in reading on SATs. She asked if the school board ever researched why public schools score lower on tests. Mr. Shim stated that parents were more involved in private schools, and he believed public schools had more diverse students.

Ms. Leach stated that salaries were different between public and private schools. Also, private schools tend to have fund raising events.

Vice Chair Clark stated there is a difference in discipline between public and private schools. She feels that public schools could be "fixed" if things were looked at positively.

Vice Chair Clark stated it was her understanding that there is a Joint Finance Budget Committee, and asked what progress has been made identifying budget cuts. She also asked if minutes were available from that group. Mr. Shim stated Mr. Moquin is the Chair of that Committee, and a request could be made to him for any information. He feels the Committee is progressing and looking at things objectively. He feels the task at this time is reviewing the budget, and they are working with the Union in that regard.

Vice Chair Clark asked if the Committee is under the Sunshine Law, and whether documents were available from the meetings. Mr. Shim explained they are not voted officials, and therefore, he did not believe they were subject to the Sunshine Law.

Mr. Shim proceeded to explain the source of various funds received from grants for certain types of classes. Vice Chair Clark stated that tax payers' money should be used for better purposes in the schools.

Ms. Cirillo stated that needs were subjective depending on the school.

Ms. Leach asked if technology dollars would be prioritized for the eastern schools. Mr. Shim stated those dollars were not divided regionally. He also proceeded to explain the growth that occurred previously in the west. He stated that replacement of schools was very involved. He also explained how funds were expended regarding testing and other mandates that had to be followed. He stated that a technology plan would be presented in March to the School Board.

Ms. Leach asked if any school closures were being discussed. Mr. Shim stated he had not heard of any potential school closings.

Mr. Shim added that administrative offices have been ignored in the past and were in poor condition. He stated that an analysis is necessary to see how and where to spend the funds, and where monies were paid back at a quicker rate. Conversion costs are sometimes involved, and more review is necessary.

Mr. Webster stated there were also security issues involved in school conversions. Mr. Shim mentioned parking issues that were also involved when buildings were converted.

Mr. Foulkes stated that Pompano Beach High School had district offices located within their walls.

Mr. Ripple asked how monies were allocated for various expenses. Mr. Shim explained what encompasses maintenance upkeep and technology replacements. It was asked how funds were differentiated between various types of expenses. Mr. Shim explained types of expenses in some of the categories. He added they were struggling to fund bare bones types of expenses. Based on future projections, it appears there will be shortfalls beginning in 2012.

Mr. Ripple asked for hypothetical examples of items that might be compromised in the future due to cuts being made by the Governor. Mr. Shim stated dollars are primarily in operations, and he has not reviewed the budget thoroughly to see where such cuts could be made. He feels they need to have a long-term strategy in regard to the capital budget in order to address certain types of issues.

Mr. Discepolo asked if fund raising events or sponsorships were considered to fulfill financial needs. Mr. Shim stated other things could be looked at, such as advertising, but to raise funds that are necessary, they are looking to tax dollars.

Ms. Leach expressed being saddened about the reputations of the eastern schools, and how needs were not prioritized for the district.

Mr. Foulkes stated that business partnerships had been a large part of the school district identifying sources of funding. The Broward Education Foundation helps teachers with grants for materials. He added that in most cases large amounts are needed by the districts, and individuals do not want higher taxes.

Vice Chair Clark stated she would not object to higher taxes, if she was assured that the monies were being spent properly.

Mr. Shim stated they all have the same purpose, and that is to provide good education. He is proud of public education and what has been accomplished. He stands behind Broward schools.

Mr. Douglas asked what Mr. Shim felt was essential regarding technology. Mr. Shim stated essential items should be determined by each school. He reiterated that the technology fund was under funded.

Vice Chair Clark stated that today's presentation was educational, and she thanked Mr. Shim for attending today's meeting.

### **Old/Ongoing Business**

- School Adoptions

Vice Chair Clark stated that the donations previously received from the respective board members had been given to Lauderdale Manors.

She stated that Dr. Persi advised of a company that was willing to donate toiletries to the schools. A letter needs to be provided regarding that request. She also advised that a motion was needed to seek permission from the City Commission to move forward regarding this matter.

### **Communications to City Commission**

Roomservice Amenities has agreed to donate toiletries to needy students in the schools adopted by the Education Advisory Board. Those schools are: Arthur Ashe, Sunland Park, and Lauderdale Manors. This Board is asking permission from the City Commission to write a letter as requested to the company to accept such

donations to be distributed through the principals of the above-mentioned schools, with the letter to be written by the Mayor on the Board's behalf.

**Motion** made by Ms. Small and seconded by Mr. Ripple to request the City Commission for approval to seek donations being offered by Roomservice Amenities.

Mr. Foulkes asked if it would be more appropriate to have the Mayor write the letter seeking the donation per recommendation of this Board.

Another suggestion was made by Ms. Cirillo that the letter be written by the Mayor and this Board.

Vice Chair Clark asked why the letter should be signed by the Mayor.

Mr. Foulkes stated that he was concerned that there might be a potential conflict of interest with Roomservice Amenities, and therefore, if the letter was signed by the Mayor, there would not be a question of conflict.

Due to the fact that the above motion was passed unanimously without discussion, a new motion was made as follows:

**Motion** made by Mr. Ripple and seconded by Mr. Foulkes to rescind the previous vote in favor of a new motion. Board unanimously approved.

**Motion** made by Mr. Discepola and seconded by Mr. Foulkes to request that the Mayor write to Roomservice Amenities, to accept their donations of toiletries to the above noted schools, on the Education Advisory Board's behalf, carried by unanimous.

- Reports/Updates/Discussion

No updates were provided by staff or the student member in attendance.

Mr. Webster proceeded to read a statement from the Cultural Outreach Department regarding Human Relations Council and Stranahan High School and Fort Lauderdale High School to address issues previously raised at this Board's meeting.

Mr. Webster made some positive comments regarding the schools and the existing programs. He also mentioned the program known as "Send Your Sales Tax To School."

Ms. Leach asked where the District stood regarding class size reductions.

Mr. Webster stated he believed a second look at this issue would be taken this month, but it was his understanding that the issue rests with the Legislature. At this point in time, the district is facing a \$3 million penalty that could be reduced by 75% if a plan is submitted that meets appropriate class sizes. They are hoping the Legislature would remove that requirement. He believes a bill has been filed to remove the penalty. They are over 90% compliant at this time.

Boundary changes had been mentioned, and Ms. Leach asked if anything had been decided in that regard. Mr. Webster stated there had been a public hearing, and the second public hearing will be held next week. He does not believe any changes had been recommended. Ms. Leach then asked what process would be involved to change a boundary. Mr. Webster stated there is a process, but he believes it changed. Therefore, he recommended everyone to view the web site regarding school boundaries for that information.

Ms. Cirillo stated that magnet dollars were becoming more scarce, and such schools did not have the resources they had previously.

Mr. Webster reiterated the district has some great students. He stated they need to keep everyone focused in the right direction.

Ms. Cirillo asked if a web site exists regarding comments made as to what could be done to improve the schools. Mr. Webster stated it was his understanding that such a communication no longer exists. There are plans to improve the web site and such work is in progress. Suggestions were made that the web site be able to receive input from teachers on a closed link, but the public should also be able to make their comments.

Mr. Ripple stated that many individuals use social media as a way to connect with things around them instead of going to a specific web site. He encouraged the school district to develop a public communications link within the frame work. This is a good tool to disseminate information quickly. He added there were also ways to filter dialogue so comments would be constructive and positive. Mr. Webster stated that all was part of the Board's direction.

Ms. Leach stated she sits on the Facilities Task Force for the School District, and they have been encouraging the district to do a pilot program site, especially in connection with the bus program.

Mr. Foulkes stated that e-mail addresses were available for school officials. He asked about the status of the Department's Director, and what was being done with Becon.

Mr. Webster stated the Director issue was a budgetary matter, and he proceeded to explain the merging of various departments. He explained some things that were being done regarding communications.

Mr. Foulkes stated the magnet schools provided community presentations regarding changes in ethnic categories for students. It was his understanding that the change permitted students to co-identify themselves with more than one race. He stated that people within the community were not familiar with this matter, and were concerned about implications in the community. He asked how this was being addressed in the district. He asked about drug testing and whether employees were tested as part of a policy.

Mr. Webster stated he would check into the matter and report back. He explained that he would check into on-going testing and initial.

Mr. Foulkes explained that a public forum was to be held on April 7, 2011 regarding the issue on the U.S. Department of Education's reclassification of race and ethnicity.

Betty Shelley stated that on February 26<sup>th</sup> the Citizens Volunteer Core and the Rotary Club would go to Thurgood Marshall to clean and paint. She encouraged individuals to come and offer their assistance. She stated the Rotary Club is sponsoring a program called "Power of One Hour."

Ms. Shelley stated the activity book was prepared regarding the Centennial and approved by the School Board. The book would also be available electronically. On February 20, the book store on 17<sup>th</sup> Street would provide a presentation on Edible History. On February 27<sup>th</sup> the story of the "Barefoot Mailman" would be presented.

### **New/Future Business**

**Motion** made by Mr. Foulkes and seconded by Ms. Cirillo to extend the Board's meeting for an additional five minutes. Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Cirillo stated that at the same time as this Board's May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, a showcase event was being held at Arthur Ashe. She would forward a flyer to Ms. Richards. She felt this might be something the Board might want to attend.

Mr. Foulkes stated that he distributed information to this Board, and called everyone's attention to an education meeting being held by Senator Sobel at Cooper City High School on May 3, 2011. He stated that at Fort Lauderdale High School at the end of March, there will be a regional debate competition and judges were needed, if anyone wanted to volunteer. He also distributed information regarding scholarships. The year 2011 has been recognized by the United Nations as an International Year of People of African Descent.

Vice Chair Clark advised of a teacher at Oakland Park Elementary wrote an essay and won a shopping spree for her classroom.

### **Next Meeting and Closing**

**Motion** made to adjourn. Board unanimously agreed. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Muhl  
Recording Secretary